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ONE DOLLAR

Transit district might seek loan to avoid cuts

A scramble for cash during government shutdown

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Sunset Empire Transportation District is exploring a \$500,000 line of credit to avoid cuts to bus routes and employee hours during the government shutdown.

Agencies large and small across the U.S. depend on reimbursements from the Federal

Transit Administration to help cover operations. With no reimbursements being processed because of the partial shutdown, many have been cutting service, with some looking at closing entirely.

Sunset Empire receives about 56 percent of operational funding from federal grants. The transit district is so far missing about \$143,000 in federal reimburse-

ments and will continue to lose that amount every three months as long as the government shutdown continues, said Jeff Hazen, the agency's executive director.

The transit district has cash on hand meant for its ending fund balance and is barred from using the money to cover operations except in the case of a

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The Sunset Empire Transportation District is looking at a line of credit to avoid cuts to service and employees during the federal government shutdown.

Colin Murphey
The Daily Astorian

URBAN TRAILS



People walk their dog along the Pipeline Road Trail off James Street in Astoria.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Official — and unofficial — paths cut through the city

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Earlier this month, a small, brown trail marker popped up near the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria directing people to what some have jokingly nicknamed the “Thigh Master 500.”

This steep, twisting trail starts on the uphill sidewalks of 17th Street, kicks east at Clatsop Community College on Jerome Avenue and takes hikers through the woods up to a meadow below the Astoria Column.

It is one of the city's official urban trails, but other, unofficial trails — often maintained by neighborhood groups, regular foot traffic and the ever-present deer — also flourish.

The North Coast Trails Coalition, a group that started out in Warrenton, provided some of the funding for the 17th Street Trail. The money helped with the maintenance and construction of a connector trail around the college parking lot. The coalition is thrilled to have signs directing visitors and locals to the hike.



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A sign identifies the location of an urban trail near Clatsop Community College.

Katie Frankowicz/The Daily Astorian

‘I just want him home’

Vigil planned for Astoria man in ICE detention

By BRENNA VISSER
The Daily Astorian

Maria Perez wants people to bring teddy bears to her husband's vigil today.

In mid-December, Ruben Perez was detained by immigration agents in Astoria after a court appearance. In the month he has been held in a federal detention center in Tacoma, Washington, the two have missed Christmas together and their 21st wedding anniversary.

So she is resolved not to miss another holiday with him, and hopes through bringing attention to his situation that she'll be able to get him back in time to receive the teddy bears as gifts for Valentine's Day.

“I just want him home,” she said.

Local activists are helping Maria Perez host the vigil, scheduled for 5 p.m. on the Astoria Riverwalk near the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Nonprofits and churches have started raising money to help the family pay the bond so her husband can leave the detention center. A GoFundMe page has been set up and circulated by InDivisible North Coast Oregon to help the family, who relied on Ruben Perez as the breadwinner, pay bills while he's away.

“We want to get him out on bond so he can come back and work,” said Kit Ketcham, a pastor at Pacific Unitarian Universalist in Astoria, who is helping to organize the vigil.

Vigils have increasingly become a popular way to bring light to immigration issues across the country since President Donald Trump made immigration enforcement a national priority. But the goal for today's event is to also call attention to how Ruben Perez was detained.

“They had him in the car”

On Dec. 14, Ruben Perez appeared in Circuit Court downtown to handle a probation matter. Last year, Perez had been arrested and charged with drunken driving.

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Education at core of governor's agenda

Brown stops in Seaside

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Gov. Kate Brown, visiting Seaside on Thursday, stressed Oregon's booming economy, low unemployment and some of the fastest job-growth rates in the country.

The problem is, she said, that growth “hasn't been inclusive.”

“There are a lot of communities and families that have been left behind,” Brown told the Seaside Rotary Club at

Angelina's Pizza. “A lot of families are struggling to pay for housing, struggling to pay for health care, struggling to pay for the cost of higher education and child care.”

Brown sees the role of state government as tackling the affordability issues for Oregon families. “That's what I see first up on the agenda for the legislative session,” she said.

About 20,000 Oregon children are without housing or “housing insecure,” living in cars or doubling up with families, she said.

The government has invested \$300 million in her first three years in office in meeting housing needs, and

during the new legislative session, she will propose a \$400 million package to double the number of affordable units.

“Our children can't learn to read, do well in school, if they don't have a warm place to go to bed at night,” Brown said.

Addressing needs of the chronically homeless and homeless veterans are also among her priorities, with a goal of housing every homeless veteran within the next 18 months.

Pension costs

Pension reform and the unfunded liability in the

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Gov. Kate Brown, far right, meets with Seaside High School students during her visit Thursday.

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

